
The Levantine Aurignacian: A view from Manot Cave, Western Galilee, Israel

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Résumé

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The Upper Paleolithic period marks the establishment of modern humans and their colonization of Eurasia. In the Levant, the Upper Paleolithic is divided into three chronological phases (Initial, Early and Late), each containing several cultural entities. The Aurignacian have long been considered the main entity in the Early Upper Paleolithic (EUP) of Europe. In the Levant, however, data on the Levantine Aurignacian is limited because sites containing well-described assemblages are few, in most cases representing restricted occupations. Techno-typological differences within and between assemblages are poorly defined and so is the chronological time span.

Eight excavation seasons (2010-2017) at Manot Cave, western Galilee, Israel, have revealed an impressive EUP sequence, ca. 2 m thick. The site presents remarkable preservation of cultural remains, containing rich flint and faunal assemblages, ash and charcoal remains, bone and antler tools, personal ornaments and mollusc shells. Thus far ten archaeological layers (Area E Layers I-X and Area I Layer 1-5) were attributed to the Aurignacian *sensu lato*. Preliminary analyses and field observations indicated diachronic and synchronic variation in the lithic assemblage, combustion feature morphology and archaeological material density which enables dividing the Aurignacian *sensu lato* into at least two discrete phases. In this report, we will present the data accumulated on the Aurignacian of Manot and try to place it in a border context of the Levantine Aurignacian as well as in the framework of the European Aurignacian.

Mots-Clés: Upper Palaeolithic, Levantine Aurignacian, Manot Cave, Israel